The search for new artistic resources in medieval poetics was often connected with intensive development of figurative speech expressive means. In classical Arabic poetry this process became distinct with the formation of a new stylistic trend budh’. The trend emerged at the second half of the 8th century, reached its climax by the late-10th century.

Within the new style formation, the expressive means system of the medieval Arabic poetry evolved, due to continual modification bidirectional process. A more intensive use of ancient figurative methods represents one of these directions [1].

The other way of system evolution was extensive development of new expressive means in practical artistic field with the subsequent reflection of this process in poetics. One can judge about the substantial changes in this sphere by the following facts: the founder of the theoretical study of budh’ style Ibn al-Mu’tazz (d. 296/908) distinguishes only 18 methods of artistic expressiveness, al-Askarī (d. after 395/1005) considers as many as 39 [2], while al-Hillī (d. ca. 749/1348), poet and theorist, sequentially incants more than 150 (!) different poetic figures in his work [3].

It seems appropriate to indicate by a number of examples the ways which helped to reach such a notable extensive development of expressive means of late medieval Arabic — and then Persian — poetry which inherited and developed the main characteristics of budh’ style.

In a treatise Gardens of Magic by a Persian theorist Raṣīl al-Dīn Waṣqī (d. 573—1177/8 or 578—1182/3) one can observe a technique called maqṣūṭa (”disrupted”) that lies in using in a bayhūr such words letters of which do not join together in writing [4].

Another technique called muṣūṣ (”joined”) is opposite to the first one and lies in “using in a bayhūr such words, the letters of which are all joined in writing”. One can find an example of this technique in maqṣūmat (”picassur short stories” — A. K.) by al-Ḥarīrī (446—516/1054—1122) [5].

Wattar also mentions another technique called samūṣ, which lies in using in a verse only words with dotted letters [6].

Hadh’ is a technique similar to samūṣ, which lies in “truncation of one or several letters of alphabet in prose or poetry”; for example “al-Ḥarīrī has a bayha in his maqṣūmat and all dotted letters are withdrawn from this bayha...” [7].

A so to speak hybrid is also acceptable. There is a technique called raṣūl, which lies in “using in prose or poetry words in which one letter has dots and the next one does not”. Wattar again gives an example from al-Ḥarīrī [8].

A variation of the latter is a technique called ḥaṣṣā’, which lies in using in prose or poetry such words that “all the letters of one word are dotted, while all the letters of the next one are not” (there is an example from al-Ḥarīrī’s epistles) [9].

Among more complicated methods combining both graphical and semantic aspects, we should consider a technique called muṣdulh which “lies in using in a proosic passage or in verses such words that if while preserving their (graphical) form, the order of dots and vocalization is changed, the sense of the bayhūr turns from praise and approval into abuse and reviling”. This technique has two variations: (i) “in muṣdulh letters [of different words] are linked to each other. To change the order of dots and vocalization, one should find the (new) word boundaries using his diligence and thought”, (ii) in muṣdulh “each separate word can be read with a change in dots and vocalization while the word boundaries remain fixed and invariable and one needn’t make an effort to define them” [10].
Let us complete this list with a technique called mu'awwad, which "lies in using by the poet in a hawf (the name of his beloved) or name of something else and concealing it either by changing vocalization, or by rearrangement [of letters or words], or by counting (the word numerical meaning is meant — A. K.) — or in some other way" [11].

Methods, which can be conditionally called "text in itself" form a special group.

One of the most interesting techniques among them is laštīh ("circumtress") which, according to Sāmis-i Qāyṣ’s "lies in the fact that a poem contains several pieces different in their meter, so as a whole it forms a qaṣīda, and if you read each piece separately, another qaṣīda emerges with another meter" [12].

As a particular type of this method, Sāmis-i Qāyṣ considers the so-called muʿawāt (muhayyaz (partite muhaṣṣəh). This method can be used in different ways: "each part [of a line] reveals its own meter"; "in each hawf a certain hawf [letter] or a word is placed which, joined together, form a name or a poem or a wish". In the example given by Sāmis-i Qāyṣ: "the last hawf of the first niṣr’s form (a certain phrase), and the first hawf of the second niṣr’s [form another phrase]... Words placed inside the first niṣr before the rhymed [one more phrase]... And words inside the second niṣr’s [the next phrase]. Words surrounding the right rhymed form a diḥayet ("quatrains" — A. K.) [of a certain content] on its two right sides...[and] on the left sides [are different]. Words surrounding the left rhymed are another diḥayet. On the two right sides... and on the left sides [there are different phrases]", etc. [13] (see fig. 1).

Beside the example given above, poems niṣrallā’i muṣrabbī ("squeezed off") which, when lined in a certain way, can be "read lengthwise as well as edgewise", seem to be a comparatively simple exercise [14].

The stylistic methods listed above are designed for visual perception and present clear evidence of the growing importance of the graphical level of a text, which was brought by medieval Arabic and Persian poets into the sphere of artistic activity and in certain cases turned into semantically significant. However, it would be wrong to treat them as "formalistic concomitance", "extravagant rhetorical play", as a value in themselves proving absolute primacy of "form" over "substance", which has often been said in works dedicated to Arabic studies [15].

Modern scholars could estimate it as a kind of paradox, but it was in this period that Arabic literary theory put forward the most consistent doctrine about the priority of substance over form. This doctrine prevailed up to the end of medieval epoch remaining the theoretical base for all later poetics and rhetoric. We mean the doctrine worked out by 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (d. 471/1078 or 474/1081), according to which the poetics of figurative means, as well as of grammatical stylistics, was meant for creating unique substantial characteristics of Arabic classical poetic and prosaic works [16].

Our observations about poetic figures and ornamentation have to be supplemented with the elements of medieval general discourse on Arabic graphics constituting the immediate and the main element of these stylistic methods. In his Treatise about calligraphers and artists (1025/1596—7) Persian scholar Qāḍī Ahmad presents the idea of the holy origin of Arabic script, which had become common in the Muslim world by that time, and which is proved by a reference to a hadith: "The first thing God created was qulam (pen — A. K.)." After that, a perception of writing process is formulated in the tractate as a magic action connected not only with the technique, skills and abilities of a master but also with his spiritual and moral character. This idea is most distinctly pronounced in an utterance ascribed by Qāḍī Abū al-Fawā'id to Plato: "Writing is geometry of soul (possible translation: "geometry of spirit"), and it is revealed through body organs" [17].

Summing up the ideas of medieval Muslim scholars about Arabic graphics, a contemporary researcher writes, with sufficient grounds, about the "holy nature of writing in Islam", about the fact that it ever became "a holy symbol of Islam" [18]. The ontological function of Arabic graphics, which has been mentioned by a number of researchers, has numerous parallels with typologically similar phenomena of world culture. Without going deep into this vast topic, let us point out to a typical parallel with European Baroque. For representatives of the latter, visible reality was a system of signs and symbols, personal and deciphering of which led to perception of the spiritual, the eternal, of the normative value, the veritable and the ideal [19]. Thus, "confluence", "unity" of the semantic and material aspects of a text are, according to a shrewd observation by A. V. Mikhailov, typical of Baroque poetry, while comprehension, "vision of the semantics" of a text happens "through its inseparable graphical image" [20].

In this context it seems absolutely natural that Arabic graphics turns into "beautiful graphics" — calligraphy with the same ontological functionality which becomes an important and often the main — element of a manuscript layout. Later, calligraphy gains an integral component status of Arabic-Muslim world artistic space on the whole penetrates into the décor of architectural monuments, monumental buildings, works of carpet, pottery, etc.

In the light of the aforementioned it becomes clear why a medieval Arabic or Persian skilled calligrapher often acted not only as creator of a graceful manuscript but also took part in all sorts of artistic crafts, especially in pottery production. The formula "on such-and-such building or buildings writing by so-and-so" accompanies most of calligrapher's biographies in the Qāḍī Ahmad's treatise [21].

Due to increase in the number of figurative graphical methods, almost synchronously with the expressive means development grew the expressive role of decorative, "pictorial" resources peculiar to Arabic and Persian literary traditions. On a later stage, many important elements of these two processes will, as will we see below, merge within the united Muslim artistic universe.

So, beginning from the 11th—12th centuries, Arabic and Persian scholars, concerning the actualization of artistic resources, which had taken place before de facto in two poetic traditions, initiated creation of a theoretical base for substantiation of this process de jure. Among their normative poetic prescriptions, one principally important thesis attracts special attention. According to it a good description (words in the genre of Arabic descriptive poetry wayf were meant here) must visually present the described object to the listener.

Let us cite the opinions of Arabic scholars. A famous philologist Qudīnā b. Ji'far (d. 337/948) characterizes an exemplary work in wayf in the following words: the poet told about the described objects in such way that "his listener can see them" [22]. Arabic specialists in poetry later supported Qudīnā. Thus, Abū 'Umar al-Askari, who has
already been mentioned above, wrote: “the best descrip-
tion... kind of presents the desired object and you can see it in front of you...” [23]. And, finally, in one of medieval works we can find the following lapidary wording: a good description “turns hearing into sight” [24].

Theses ideas of Medieval Arabic theorists about waf have typological parallels in world literature. Let us again look at similar phenomena in European Baroque literature.

“Poetry is speaking painting”, “a poet must write with paints” — this was the essence of ideas of Baroque poetic world representatives, which gravitated towards “visual concreteness of symbolic figurativeness”, towards “tangible visibility of notions”. A well-known thesis of Baroque poet Gianbattista Marino (1569—1625) about different arts synthesis was very popular: “About poetry they say that it paints, and about art — that it describes” [25]. When ana-
lyzing the style of a Russian Baroque poet Simeon Polotskii, L. P. Yemelin wrote that his “poems could not only be read but also looked at the way one looks at a building or a painting” [26].

In the present article, we will not give examples of ver-
bal “painting” from Arabic and Persian waf works, which served as a basis for the theses of medieval theorists quoted above [27]. We shall only point to the fact that the figurativeness of Arabic and Persian poetry was not limited to descriptive genre. Later among Muslim authors there appeared poems that were constructed in the shape of simple geometrical figures and drawings, which was ana-
logues to the European genre of artificial poetry (poesia aritmetica) [28].

To illustrate this let us make a quotation from Sams-i Qays’s treatise A Compendium of the Standards of Persian Poetry: “... Poems represented in the shape of a tree are called.. malqajar (..ornamented with trees and leaves)…” [29] “And poems in the shape of a bird are called ma’qad (..ornamented with birds), round-shaped poems — mawwir (..round)”, and those represented as an interweaving of geometrical forms are called ma’aqad (..knotty, intricate)…” One of the sophisticated poets put a girn (poetic passage — A. K.) in such form and on each area formed by crossing lines placed words which, when joined together, form a bayt” [30] (see fig. 2).

In conclusion, we would like to look at a particular but important phenomenon of Arabic and Persian poetry, which combined descriptive poetry and graphics — calligraphy. In Arabic, as well as in Persian classical poetry, graphi-
cal (letter) metaphors and comparisons were widely spread. It is considered that comparisons using separate letters ap-
peared very early — in the works of an Arabic poet Dhu
al-Rammâ (d. 1177/78) [31]. In amorous poetry, for instance, the traditional topic describing the beauty of the beloved could contain a comparison of her stature with alif, of a lock on her temple with qaf and jin in the final position, or with ra’, her mouth with mimm, etc. [31]. Thus, the letters of the Arabic alphabet were anthropomorphized, as they were used — even though within modest limits — as graphical elements for picturing human appearance.

Here it seems necessary to point to an important cir-
cumstance, which slipped the attention of researchers.
Number of serious studies is dedicated to the letters anthropo-
morphization issue in the history of Muslim fine arts. It is well known that this “significant for Muslim art phenomen-
on is only marked on articles made of metal” and is widely registered only beginning from the 4th/10th century [32]. Anthropomorphized letter figurative means in Arabic (and 
later also Persian) poetry allow to look for sources of this phenomenon in the earlier period, and give additional grounds to regard Arabic graphics as an integrant (in the certain period) component of Muslim artistic thinking on the whole. Representatives of Hurufiyâ movement (emerged in the late-S7/14th century) gave a new impulse for “enlivening” of Arabic letters.

There is no need to give an account of their doctrine in the present article. Let us content ourselves with some basic information about Hurufiyâ relevant to establish connec-
tion with the issue in question. According to Hurufiyâ doctrine inconceivable divine essence is manifested in man, “as the God’s name — Allah — is inscribed on man’s face: the nose being the alif, the two lobes of the nose the two lammas, and the eyes having the form of hâ”. Inconceivable divine essence is revealed in a word consisting of letters (hirf) of 
the Arabic alphabet to which adherents of the sect attached mystical importance; using numerical meanings of letters they conducted complicated cabalistic calculations [33].

As we can see, Hurufiyâ used elements of the traditional anthropomorphized letter topic of Arabic and Persian po-
etry. Later they realized letter metaphors converting them into the language of painting, fine arts. Portraits made by Hurufiyâ authors are graphic images of human faces designed with the help of words where the letter numerical meaning form mystically interpreted quantities. Here we come across the exclusive circle: mystified anthropomor-
phized Arabic graphics became a means of picturing by words, handwriting turned into drawing, drawing scrip-
t [34] (see fig. 3).

Notes
1. One philologist noted as an achievement the use of two antitheses (malqajar) in a hemistich by Abu Tammâm (d. 321/934 or
225/846); see: Al-’Askari, Kitab al-Sîma’âyân (“The Book of Two Arts”) (Cairo, 2nd ed., 1971), p. 325. Another philologist wrote that poet al-’A’înâ (d. 284/937), who combined three antitheses in one line, had excited admiration of contemporaries in the Arabic poetry until he was surpassed by Al-Mutanabî (d. 354/965) who managed to combine four antitheses in one line; see: Al-’Thâkiyy, Yarat al-dahr al-malqajî al-sîma’âyân (“The Unique Pearl of the Age About the Merits of This Century”), iv (Cairo, 1956—8), pp. 153—4.


when in the first verse “all letters are written separately, in the second they are connected in twos, in the third — in threes and in the fourth in fours” (ibid., p. 195).

5. Ibid., p. 149.

6. Ibid., pp. 149, 297.

7. Ibid., pp. 149—50, 298.

8. Ibid., pp. 150—1, 299.

9. Ibid., p. 151, 300.

10. Ibid., pp. 151—4, 301.

11. Ibid., pp. 155—6, 303.


13. Ibid., pp. 266—7.


16. For more details see: Kudelín, Srednověkova arabská poeziia, pp. 130—64, 195—7; idem, “Avtor i tradicionalistski kanon”, pp. 233—6.

17. Qosim Ahmed, Tvorstvo o kaligraphii i khrabjavashči (Treatise on Calligraphers and Artists), introduction, transl. and comments by Prof. B. N. Zakhoše (Moscow—Leningrad, 1947), pp. 56, 59; for more details see introduction by Zakhoše, p. 35 and further.


19. For more details see: L. I. Sazonova, Poeziia mezhevestruvno birovka (verovain polovina XVII—nachala XVIII v.) (Russian Baroque Poetry (Second Half of the 17th—Early 18th Centuries)) (Moscow, 1993), p. 86.


21. For more details see introduction by Zakhoše to his edition of Qufi Ahmad treatise, p. 38. Rosenthal, who specially studied the function of Arabic graphics, insists on the idea that “writing was used in Islam as a form of artistic expression”, referring to one of the authors of books on calligraphy, Ibn Danawish (d. 346/957), who said that “besides the technical and the utilitarian aspects of writing... there is another important aspect, which is: fancy inscriptions on paper and stone (nastaf, naghf)" (Rosenthal, op. cit., p. 154).


26. Cit. from Sazonova, op. cit., p. 77; for more details see: ibid., pp. 74—86.

27. For examples from Arabic descriptive poetry with the corresponding comments from medieval critics see: Kudelín, Klasickéhochslovakska arabsko-islamska poeziia (konec X—štvrťa XII v.) (Classical Arabic-Spanish poetry (Late 10th—Mid-12th Cent)) (Moscow, 1973), p. 119—27.

28. For more details see: Sazonova, op. cit., pp. 78—86.

29. See: Samsu Qays, op. cit., p. 269.

30. Ibid., p. 270.

31. For more details see: Rosenthal, op. cit., pp. 155, 161. Interesting examples with such topic from Persian poetry can be found in Šaraf al-Dīn Ramī’s treatise Interlocutor of Lovers (mid-14th century) (see: “Sobehedišar vīlahtūški Sharaf al-Dīn Ramī o lokonak, chel o hovirak vīlahtūški” ("Interlocutor of Lovers by Šaraf al-Dīn Ramī about locks, forehead and eye-brows of lovers”), introduction, transl. and comments by Chiatsara, Vestiš RGU, IV: Vostok: Isčelentnosta Peversy, ii (Moscow, 2000), pp. 102, 116 and below.

32. See: Shukurov, op. cit., p. 52.


A. KUDELIN. Arabic Literature: Poetics and Stylistics. I

M. Theoretical comprehension of drawing together of graphics with fine arts we can find in the abovementioned Treatise on Calligraphers and Artists (1005/1600—97) by Qufi Ahmad where, for the first time in the Muslim world, the “theory of two columns” is formulated, according to which an artist’s brush was compared to a calligrapher’s pen (qalam), which naturally led to religious consecration of fine arts (for more details see introduction by Zakhoše, op. cit., pp. 37—9.

Illustrations

Fig. 1. Samsu Qays al-Razi, op. cit., p. 267.

Fig. 2. Ms inappol sample from ibid., p. 270.

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL BOARD ................................................................. 3

TEXTS AND MANUSCRIPTS: DESCRIPTION AND RESEARCH .................. 4

A. Kudelin, Arabic Literature: Poetics and Stylistics. I: Medieval Arabic Graphic Culture (Pictorial Figures to Drawing Script) ......................................................... 4
M. Reisner, The Life of the Text and the Fate of Tradition. II: "Old Age Qasida" by Rida'i (the Standard and Its Deviation) ............................................................ 12

PRESENTING THE COLLECTION ............................................. 19

A. Sintenis, E. Yamashita, Paintings by Kawahara Keiga and Other Early 19th Century Japanese Artists in the Johan Frederick van Overmeer Finscher Collection (Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography) ...................................................... 19

PRESENTING THE MANUSCRIPT ............................................. 32

E. Rezvani, New folios from "Uthmanic Qur’an I. (Library of Administration for Muslim Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan) .............................................. 32

SCRIPTS, PAGE SETTINGS AND BINDINGS OF MIDDLE-EASTERN MANUSCRIPTS
Papers of the Third International Conference on Codicology and Palaeography of Middle-Eastern Manuscripts, Bologna, 4–6 October, 2000 (part III) ........................................... 42

I. Afshar, Inscriptions on the Covers of Islamic Manuscripts: An Introductory Study ................................................................. 42
T. Tusch, Datierung und Herkunft der manuskriptlichen Einbände im Museum für Islamische Kunst in Berlin ................................................................. 52
T. Stanke, Page-setting in Late Ottoman Qur’ans. An Aspect of Standardization ................................................................. 56
M. Efthymiou, Quelques réflexions sur les reliures d’Asie Centrale dans les fonds de la Bibliothèque nationale de France ................................................................. 63

BOOK REVIEWS ................................................................. 71

Front cover:
Plate 1. No. 13-24. Kawahara Keiga, “A view of a highway station”, Nikkor Fukei zu (Views of Japan. Edo Period (19th c.). Painting unformatted; colour on silk; 71.2 x 94.3 cm (whole); 52.5 x 62.5 cm (painting), no seal, no signature.

Back cover:
Plate 2. No. 13-34/39(8). Idem, “A visit to a Shinto shrine”, Life of Japanese people. Edo Period (19th c.). Painting unformatted (album folio); colour on silk; gold; 34.1 x 44.3 cm (whole); 32.3 x 44.3 cm (painting), no seal, no signature.
Plate 3. No. 13-34/39(5). Idem, “Wedding ceremony”, ibid. Edo Period (19th c.). Painting unformatted (album folio); colour on silk; gold; 32.5 x 44.5 cm, no seal, no signature.
Plate 4. No. 13-34/39(17). Idem, “A greeting of the bridegroom’s family by a representative of the house of the bride”, ibid. Edo Period (19th c.). Painting unformatted (album folio); colour on silk; gold; 32.2 x 44.0 cm, no seal, no signature.
Plate 5. No. 13-34/39(30). Idem, “A scene at a cemetery”, ibid. Edo Period (19th c.). Painting unformatted (album folio); colour on silk; 32.3 x 44.4 cm, no seal, no signature.